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Plaint of a Papyrophobe

Don't File It, Throw It Away

By NICHOLAS SAMSTAG

The human affinity for paper is a wonderful thing.

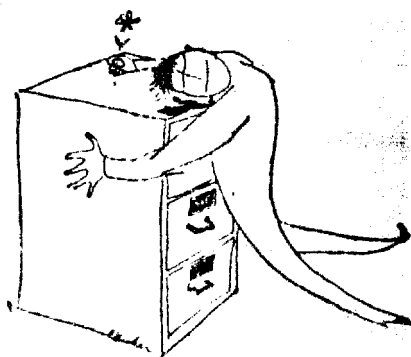
People like paper. They collect it, treasure it, measure their importance by how much of it they receive and send. They hoard it as the philatelist hoards stamps, and they revel in it like a puppy rolling in a drift of autumn leaves. And often they drown in it—or get backed into a corner by filing cases filled with it.

In most companies there are three types of Papyrophiles. (Spell it "Papyrophiles," with the cabinets in mind, if you like.)

There is, first, the *Egopapyrophile*. Male or female, this species cannot bear to part with even a single piece of paper on which any of his precious thoughts or calculations has ever been recorded. In his files, you will find the first memo he ever wrote himself when he came to work. It's on the back of a crumpled envelope, and it says: "Find out when get paid—and why."

His first, second, third and fourth drafts of every memo, project or piece of copy he has had anything to do with are also on file. So are the final drafts.

He never refers to these things, of course. But if you watch him going into



Irwin Glusker

The Egopapyrophile

his office when he thinks you aren't, you'll see him bestow a loving pat on his escarpment of filing cabinets as he goes by. Something like a contented, middle-aged alderman, furtively patting his little paunch after a good, heavy dinner.

Next there is the *Heteropapyrophile*.

This specimen cannot bear to part with any piece of paper any one sends him, or any that he can get hold of in any other way.

Direct mail from outside and inside the company; mimeographed, multilithed, multigraphed reports and announcements; and, of course, all memos in which his name or department are mentioned—all, all of them go to his secretary (or somewhere) marked "File Carefully!"

And clippings and tearsheets out of

anywhere (from the *Spielvogel Review* to the *Wall Street Journal*)—off go to the files. He says he may want to refer to them later; only, of course, he never does.

No one has ever told him that best filing cabinets are round, and he has one right next to his desk—that is invitingly empty every morning.

It never occurs to him that if he wants to refer to a memo some one else the company has sent him, he has to remember who sent it to him, probably the files won't turn it up for him. And if he remembers who sent the sender undoubtedly has a copy that he can get in five minutes.

The *Heteropapyrophile* is usually a likable fellow. He is easily pleased, delighted when you put him on a list to receive anything, prompt to thank for "your interesting memo" next time he sees you. In fact, so grateful is he for these little attentions, that he probably doesn't rate them.

Now let us discuss briefly the *Philanthropapyrophile*.

He loves his fellow man, and he loves paper. Therefore, he showers paper upon his fellow man.

The tops of his memos remind you Koko in "The Mikado"—the man who "had a little list." These communications are addressed (by name) not to the operators interested, but to their assistants and associates. To spread the wealth, his secretary either has to type four originals with four carbons each, or cut a stencil for mimeograph section.

He has never heard of the ancient custom by which an operator can scribble the name of an assistant on an incoming memo and thus make one piece of paper do the work of two. Or doesn't trust the operator to do it. Which means he doesn't feel the matter will think his memo is sufficiently important. Maybe the boss is right.

The *Philanthropapyrophile* is open to a suspicion of being an *Egophile*. It might be said, by those among us who do not take everything at its face value that he is not as interested in spreading his memo widely about as in getting greater distribution for his name.

One final observation. This piece, being written by a Papyrophobe, wishes this to suggest:

When you have finished reading this article, cut it out of the paper. You will find it is of a size and shape to fit easily into the round filing cabinet mentioned earlier. Now grasp it by its lower right-hand corner. At the signal, be prepared to lift it over that receptacle and let it fall without compunction. Send it to wherever else. Ready?

One, two, three—LET IT GO!

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP					
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1	James A. Garrison	<i>JAG</i>	MAY 14 1957		
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<div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> APPROVAL</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> INFORMATION</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> SIGNATURE</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> ACTION</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> DIRECT REPLY</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> RETURN</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> COMMENT</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> PREPARATION OF REPLY</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> DISPATCH</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> CONCURRENCE</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> RECOMMENDATION</div> <div style="width: 33%;"><input type="checkbox"/> FILE</div> </div> <p>Remarks:</p> <p>Attached is a brief article on printing services prepared for inclusion in a future issue of the Support Bulletin. Questions regarding it can be submitted to the Chief, Printing Services Division.</p>					

SENDER'S CHECK FOR DISPOSITION OF RVS-80 UNCLASSIFIED CONFIDENTIAL SECRET			
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP			
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	ACTION	DIRECT REPLY	PREPARE REPLY
	APPROVAL	DISPATCH	RECOMMENDATION
	COMMENT	2 FILE SB-13 <i>Chadley</i>	RETURN
	CONCURRENCE	2 INFORMATION	SIGNATURE
Remarks: [REDACTED] (Management Staff Analyst for DD/P Area) called to say how much he enjoyed the "Dear Boss" article in the September-October Support Bulletin (SB-12). He said he had read an article in the American Management Association's "Management Review" (August 1958) which he thought might make a good sequel. It's called "How to Keep A Secretary". I suggested he send it along to you.			
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